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GIVEN BY

Dr. B. E. De Costar.

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Harriet Cooper Spencer De Costa



Harriet Cooper Spencer De Costa
At the age of Thirty-eight.



IN MEMORIAM:

Harriet Cooper Spencer De Costa.

4449^a/₁₁ 23

*"Thou art my hope, O Lord God; Thou art my
trust from youth."—Ps. LXI : 5.*

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For B. S. De Costa

Sept. 16, 1901.



To the One in Paradise.

Rest, Weary Soul, life's brief *mirage* is ended,
A true horizon opens, boundless, splendid,
To new-born sight ;
And with the blest precision of celestial vision,
Ethereal light !
Repose more tranquil is vouchsafed to Thee
Than the deep stillness of this tranquil sea,
Asleep, soft dreaming as the hours go by
Of summer glories in the turquoise sky
From storm cloud free.

Rest, Weary Soul, two worlds in one are blended,
Thy lesson learned, if dimly comprehended,
Midst mortal years ;
And lo ! the sweet fruition of Divine tuition
Stays all Thy tears :
Thy childlike faith long bore deep sorrow's strain,
But loss endured now shines empearled as gain,
And Thy deep nature holds that wondrous calm
No ocean guages, e'en when halcyon charm
Broods o'er the main.

* * * *

Rest, Weary Soul, though westward day hath wended,
 Till Catalina pales by mists attended,
 And night shades grow ;
 For rays of Light supernal, sweet, serene Eternal,
 Around Thee glow :
 Rest, while the sea John saw before God's Throne
 A sea that mirrors multitudes His own,
 Is viewed with joy by Thy late tear-stained eyes,
 Though the Pacific, changed as daylight dies,
 Finds me alone.

Rest, Weary Soul, above the stars ascended
 To shining heights in Paradise, forefended
 From every ill ;
 Rest, as the restless ocean heaves with new commotion,
 And winds blow chill :
 Since when around this isle dark shadows lie,
 Beyond the confines of the sea and sky
 I hail Thy country in the distance fair,
 And wait the angel that shall call me where
 No night comes nigh.

*Island of Santa Catalina, Pacific Ocean,
 Sunday, June 30, 1901.*



Memoranda.



ARRIET COOPER SPENCER DECOSTA, daughter of Harvey and Frances Sharpe Spencer, was born in New York City, December 18, 1826, and entered into rest Easter Even, April 6, 1901. Her father was of the old Spencer Family of Connecticut, being the son of Christopher and Mary Pearson Spencer, coming from Guilford to New York when quite young, with his friend Fitz-Greene Halleck, the poet. By his commercial talents and industry, combined with probity, he established himself in a solid and prosperous business, though dying at the age of forty-four, while his daughter, the subject of this brief sketch, was still a child.

Mrs. De Costa's mother was the daughter of the Hon. Peter and Christina Nostrand Sharpe, of New York City, Mr. Sharpe being a member of Congress, Speaker of the New York Assembly, a pillar in the Dutch Reformed body and a person of wealth and influence. His ancestor was Jacob Sharpe, or Scheep, who came from the Palatinate of the lower Rhine, being a prominent member of the Company brought out by Governor Hunter, in 1710, settling at German-

town and Saugerties. To Mrs. De Costa's English and Dutch blood there was added an infusion of French. After the decease of Mr. Sharpe's wife, his little granddaughter, whose father had also passed away, became a great favorite, the two broken families being formed substantially into one. He was delighted to have the child sit by his knee and read to him out of the Bible, she being naturally a good reader.

When young, being very delicate, it was feared that she might not attain to womanhood ; but strength came with years, and her constitution, though very sensitive, became quite strong. Reaching a suitable age, with her older sister, the late Mrs. Christina Atwater, she entered the well-known day school conducted by the Misses Maynard, whose most excellent educational system was favored by many of the best families. At a later period she studied at the institution directed by the Misses Dutton, at New Haven.

After leaving school she evinced a decided fondness for society, and enjoyed all the pleasures incident to fashionable life. At the same time attention was paid to the development of Christian character, which was formed under the guidance of her most faithful and devoted mother, who was a sincere and devout Christian. Thus the religious sentiment was rapidly deepened. Even during school days she made abstracts of sermons delivered by some of the best preachers, who

were regularly heard on Sundays. A number of these still remain.

Her early training was received in connection with the Dutch Reformed Communion, of which the celebrated Domine Gerardus Arense Kuypers was a minister. He was connected with her family. From him she received the name, Cooper, or Kuyper ; but she was much under the influence of the Rev. George W. Bethune, D.D., orator and poet, who always felt a deep interest in her welfare.

She attended the Episcopalian Church after her marriage to the Rev. B. F. De Costa, then a minister of that body, and Editor of *The Christian Times*, though now a member of the Catholic Church, the ceremony taking place in the Church of the Ascension, New York, the Right Reverend Horatio Potter, D.D., and the Rev. Dr. John Cotton Smith officiating.

Mrs. De Costa was early taught by her revered mother, whose memory she so tenderly cherished to the last, never to speak against or criticise either individuals or bodies of Christians on account of any denominational difference. If differences were introduced, she usually took care to say, "We all seek one Country."

Neither precept nor example could move her to offend. Indeed, in all things she kept close to the thought of her mother. Circumstances, especially

towards the end of her mother's life, tended to favor the natural instinct. Ever at her mother's side, she was ever loving and loyal, however, at times, in tremulous moods, inclined to self-assertion. When the long-dreaded separation came, with its poignant, overwhelming grief, in accordance with a well-known and kindly law of the mind, she would fail occasionally, for the moment, to realize that the one loved above all others had actually been taken away. Consequently, when in the garden, she might gather a bouquet, and spring back into the house, saying, "Mother, I've brought you some flowers," only to be confronted with the mournful sight of the empty chair.

The loss of her father, ever highly esteemed for his honorable and upright character, was deeply felt; and, often, in her own simple, unique way, not without a touching pathos, she would tell how, in the summer, when at the old Guilford homestead, as the hour of sunset came, she would walk, hand in hand with her mother out to the silent, secluded cemetery, God's Acre, where they would mingle their tears on the green sod covering that loved father's grave. Yet the death of her mother was felt still more deeply. When quite young she had somewhere read a poem relating to the loss of a mother, and during all the years that followed her own bereavement the poem dwelt vaguely in her mind, yet with a singular per-

sistence. From time to time it would be referred to whether at home or abroad. Very often the wish was expressed that it might be recovered. It was valued as expressing her own experience, though only a couple of lines were dimly remembered. Its spirit was well recalled. A query was sent to the *Evening Post* without results, as the clue given was very indefinite. The old school readers were explored, elegiac pieces were examined, and years passed, until one day it was discovered, it being Cowper's poem, "On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture Out of Norfolk," containing the lines that it had been possible partially to recall :

" My Mother, when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ? "

Now, after the lapse of nearly forty years, the poem was read over and over again, all the while thinking much upon the probable occupations of the loved ones in the spirit world, and indulging, in accordance with the Church's teaching of the Communion of Saints, the thought expressed by the poet, that, though unseen, the departed hovered at times over former familiar scenes on earth, perhaps shedding tears of sympathy, if souls in bliss can weep. The memory of her mother was part of her own existence. It was a golden thread running through the warp and woof of life, while the sense of loss ever flowed on like some subterranean stream running through a fair

land, often coming to the surface. But we are anticipating. Let us return.

When young, Mrs. De Costa traveled somewhat in the United States and Canada, but after her marriage made extended tours, being the inseparable companion of her husband both at home and abroad, down to the last foreign voyage. She was one of the best of travelers, being always pleased with the route and destination, never in a single voyage suffering inconvenience from the sea. Beginning with summer journeys on the coast of New England and among the British Provinces, many secluded nooks and corners of these regions were explored and enjoyed, especially in little-known places like the Island of Cape Breton and Grand Menan.

In 1873 her long foreign tours were begun, ending only in 1898, with a third voyage to Egypt. The first tour occupied nearly three years, Mr. De Costa having occasion to pursue special historical studies at various European centres. She took pleasure in making for him a copy of a manuscript in the Lambeth Palace Library, at London, or in sitting by his side in the inner working library of the Vatican, where only a chosen few, and rarely a woman, gained admission. On her first journey abroad, Ireland and Scotland were taken in, furnishing unique and delightful experiences. She heard with glee the sweet "Bells of Shandon," and was pleased with romantic Edin-

burg. London proved impressive ; Paris exerted a charm ; while Brittany, Normandy and the dizzy heights of Mont St. Michel filled her mind with most beautiful recollections. Italy and Sicily were enjoyed to the utmost, and, when at Rome with her husband, by the kindness of the present bishop of Vincennes, she had the very great privilege of being presented personally to His Holiness, Pio Nono, receiving his benediction.

Later, in Norway, daylight at midnight occasioned deep wonderment ; and Sweden and Denmark added their interest to that of Germany, Holland and Switzerland, the St. Bernard Pass being ascended and a night spent at the convent situated amid perpetual snow. She gazed with affectionate admiration upon the noble St. Bernard dogs, those philanthropists of the Alps, who go out in search of belated travelers and bring them to the Hospice.

Two journeys were made to Palestine, in 1894 and 1896, a record of the former being kept with her own hand. Much time was spent at Jerusalem, her mind being deeply impressed by scenes associated with the life and sufferings of the Saviour ; lingering at Calvary, Gethsemane and on the Mount of Olives ; visiting Bethany, Bethlehem, Hebron, the Jordan and the Dead Sea. She felt quite at home when staying at Franciscan convents like those in Jaffa, Ramleh and Jerusalem.

Mrs. De Costa's voyage over the Sea of Galilee, with the Stars and Stripes flying at the peak, was remembered with rare satisfaction. She would say: "I used to think that I should see Jesus coming, walking on the water." The song, "Beautiful Galilee," sung by the Arab boatmen as we coasted past the shores of Capernaum and Bethsaida, long rang in her ears.

The journey across Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, over the route pursued by Solomon in his sumptuous palanquin, amid splendid snow-peaks and wild passes, ending at Damascus, the Flower of the Desert—a rare exhibition of oriental life and activity—all filled with most pleasurable emotion a mind that responded to the beautiful in nature with the artless elation of a child. With what wonder did she gaze upon mighty Baalbec, with its Phenician, Roman and Saracen architecture, the Phenician work remaining unshaken after thousands of years, while the Roman palaces and temples, rent by earthquakes, lay thrown down in ruins at once tremendous and beautiful; and how deep was the feeling, expressed by her large and still lustrous eyes, when, returning homeward by the way of Smyrna and a thousand classic isles, she stood on Mars Hill, viewing the decayed yet splendid temples of lovely Athens—a feeling that only grew more intense as she afterwards journeyed through the land, inspecting the desolate shrines of the Greek gods, and looking up with awe at Mount Olympus,

rising against the deep, azure sky beyond the Gulf of Corinth, clothed with ineffable majesty.

The last foreign tour, in 1898, took her no farther than Egypt, though varied by visits to some remarkable places on the Mediterranean. The ascent of the Nile having been made in 1896, much time was spent at Cairo, the city of the Arabian Nights. A week was given to the desert, at Mene Ra, in front of Ghezeh, the Great Pyramid, where, as on a former visit, journeys were made on camels and in sand carts. The love of birds and animals was pronounced, but in Egypt her camel proved the favorite when traveling around where Pyramid and Sphinx lift up their mighty forms above a sea of sand.

One turns with deep sorrow from these delightful memories, the record of earthly journeys, to speak of that long and final journey from which no traveler returns.

We may remember, however, with profit, that the very beginning of life points to its end. With our early strength we enter upon a road that leads to dissolution. With the first beat of the heart men begin to die. Longfellow reminds us of the fact, that all hearts are beating funeral marches to the grave. Yet, as stated, the fragile little girl, whose life story gains these brief *Memoranda*, rose superior to parental fear, gaining strength with time and becoming capable of endurance.

Nevertheless, with her highly sensitive organization, Mrs. De Costa proved keenly alive to suffering. In later years, indeed, she was not understood, though a notable exception was found in the case of the London physician, who, in 1873, when called in to treat her for supposed debility, without knowing anything whatever of her personal history, after a careful diagnosis, gave a written opinion, stating that at some time she must have experienced a severe shock. This judgment was singularly correct, since, a little while before, in a runaway at Mount Desert, she had been thrown from her carriage with great violence, and had a narrow escape from death. The effect of that shock continued to tell more and more, year after year, upon her nervous system, and, finally, with most serious results. Ocean voyages often proved beneficial; but all means of relief failed, and, during the last two years, the decline was steadily going on. Eventually she avoided company, and began to say, "I am so tired; if I could only rest."

Yet the end suddenly came. As Easter Even dawned, falling unconscious, it being simply a general failure of the system, she nevertheless revived, after a time, and an hour before her decease, the hope, and indeed the expectation, was entertained that she would, in a good measure, recover and continue with us for some time. In 1894, on the eve of the departure for Egypt, an attack was suffered that filled us all

with alarm ; but that singularly tenacious constitution triumphed, and, most thankful to Almighty God for His goodness, we took our way by the Azores to Madeira and thence to Egypt, to Holy Land and Jerusalem. But now the time had come for the journey to the Jerusalem that is above ; and, to our infinite sorrow, she sank again into unconsciousness. Soon her tired spirit, so desirous of rest, passed painlessly away to the land of the nightless day and winterless year.

Mrs. De Costa's faith was striking and unique in its simplicity. A faith like hers is vouchsafed to few. She never wavered. No doubt ever entered her mind or obscured the truths of the Christian religion. It was the faith of a little child. Divine things were the greatest of all realities. What she did not understand was nevertheless received, waiting humbly for the time when the spiritual horizon would broaden and faith become sight. God was always very near. He was her hope from youth. Christ the Saviour was a Saviour close at hand, ever ready to save.

While grasping firmly the central truths of Christianity, there was no aptitude for dogmatic distinctions. With a mind hospitable toward all good, as a little child she went, wrapped around by her mother's cloak, to the Dutch mid-week meeting, or, with faithful Rose Corrigan, found her way to the neighboring Catholic Church at Christmas-tide to visit the Crib ;

even as in mature years she was ready to hear a sermon at the Abbey by the Archbishop of Canterbury or enjoy the Stations of the Cross during Lent in an Egyptian Monastery. She was in perfectly good faith.

Her books of devotion contained, laid in, many precious hymns ; and special passages in her Bible, treasured most reverently as the very Word of God, were carefully marked. Pages of her favorite Psalms were greatly worn by daily use, her mind resting strongly upon passages expressing faith, hope and resignation. She knew the meaning of the words of the Psalmist, who said, " Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Poems and hymns that impressed her were often copied with her pen. Her thought was :

" He leads us on
By paths we do not know,
Upward He leads us though our steps be slow."

She felt the force and beauty of some lines on " The Lesson of the Camel," which she had so often seen kneel in the East, and copied them with a pencil when her hand had become enfeebled:

" The Camel at the close of day,
Kneels down upon the sandy plain
To have his burden lifted off,
And rest again.



Harriet Cooper Spencer De Costa at the Pyramids, 1896.

“ My Soul, thou, too, shouldst to thy knees
 When daylight draweth to a close,
 And let thy Master lift the load
 And grant repose.”

Now for her the Master has lifted off the last load, and the rest that was craved with the utterance of the words, “ I am so weary,” is granted forevermore.

On Palm Sunday preceding, she expressed a desire to visit the Church of the Transfiguration and hear the lecture by the Reverend Father Donahoe on The Passion. Her wish was gladly complied with, especially as she appeared unusually well. She enjoyed the lecture and illustrative music by a special quartette, and afterwards made a little visit at the Rectory, reaching home without any ill effect. In a day or two, however, she began to fail, and as the dawn of Holy Saturday was breaking, her soul passed from earth.

On Easter Monday, in advance of the funeral service, the Reverend Father Donahoe most kindly came and said an Office ; and, later, before the remains were taken to the Marble Cemetery, the quartette, heard with so much pleasure the previous Sunday evening at the Church of the Transfiguration, sang, with very sweet effect, “ Nearer, My God, to Thee.”

There is one very dear recollection that may not be omitted, the memory of which led to the composition of the lines written while sojourning at Santa Catalina, a most beautiful island in the Pacific. On Easter

Sunday morning her remains reposed in a simple casket, presenting a picture that filled every beholder with a feeling of mingled comfort and astonishment. All were profoundly impressed. It was a joy. On the Resurrection morn, as if in sympathy with the day, there came a most remarkable return of youthful beauty. Her countenance seemed to be pervaded in a wondrous degree by that peace which passeth all understanding. Every sign of pain, grief and care had disappeared, and on the face of the sleeper was the unutterably sweet expression of one who already stood among the scenes of Paradise.

Requiescat in Pace.

*Eve of the Feast of the Assumption,
New York, 1901.*



